

REMARKS

By this Amendment, no claims are canceled or amended, and no new claims are presented for examination. Claims 1-5 were previously canceled, and claims 6-9 were previously presented for examination in the Preliminary Amendment submitted with the national stage application on January 18, 2002. As a result, claims 6-9 remain pending in the application.

Specification

Pursuant to paragraph 1 of the above-referenced Office Action, the Examiner asserts that the title of the invention is not descriptive and requires a new title that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed. As stated in MPEP 1302.01, the title "should be as short and specific as possible. However, the title should be descriptive of the invention claimed, even though a longer title may result." Independent claim 6 is directed to "[a]n optical fiber connector" and independent claim 8 is directed to "[a] method of connecting an optical fiber connector to a fiber optic cable." The title of the invention is: "*Optical fiber connector and method of connection to the end of an optical fiber cable.*" Accordingly, Applicants submit that the title is descriptive of the invention claimed, while not being excessively long. In the even that the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is empowered by MPEP 1302.01 to "change the title on or after allowance" pursuant to MPEP 606.01.

Claim Rejections — 35 U.S.C. § 102

Pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Office Action, claims 6-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,363,459 to Hultermans et al. The Examiner asserts that Hultermans et al. Figures 1-6 "shows an optical fiber connector 10 and a method of connecting the optical connector to an optical fiber cable comprising a polished end face 40-2, a ferrule 40 with a piece of an optical fiber 42 [sic: 41], a ferrule holder 36, a basic housing 30, a crimping ring 58, an anti-kink guard 62 and an outer housing 20. The optical fiber

has an end point within the ferrule holder and *can be fusion spliced* to an optical fiber 14 of the optical fiber cable 12.” (Emphasis added.)

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection with respect to independent claims 6 and 8. Hultermans et al. discloses an optical fiber connector and a method of *mechanically butt-splicing* a pre-mounted optical fiber 41 of a ferrule 40 mounted in a barrel (i.e., ferrule holder) 30 to an optical fiber 14 of a fiber optic cable 12 *in the central part of the barrel 30*. See Abstract. In particular,

“[t]he barrel 30 has a central part 33 (FIG. 2) which *may be crimped in order to butt splice* the optical fiber 14 to the optical fiber 41 (shown in phantom in FIG. 2).

Column 3 at lines 62-65 (emphasis added). And further,

The user then cleaves an end 14-1 (FIG. 2) of the fiber 14 with a cleaving tool (not shown), dips the end 14-1 into an index matching gel (not shown) and then guides the end 14-1 into the second end 38 until the end 14-1 engages the optical fiber 41 which is pre-mounted in the barrel 30. ... The user then *uses a crimp tool (not shown) to deform and crimp the central part 33 of the barrel 30* in the manner described in U.S. Pat. No. 4,435,038, thereby splicing [i.e., mechanically butt-splicing] the optical fiber 14 to the optical fiber 41.

Column 5 at lines 12-23 (emphasis added).

Claim 6 specifically requires that the piece of optical fiber *extend from the ferrule in a rearward direction for fusion splicing* to the fiber optic cable. In contrast, Hultermans et al. discloses that the optical fiber 41 is pre-mounted *within* the barrel 30 and the end 14-1 of the optical fiber 14 is guided into the second end 38 of the barrel 30 until the end 14-1 engages the optical fiber 41. Furthermore, claim 6 specifically requires that the ferrule holder *is removably attached to the ferrule* to allow the piece of optical fiber extending from the ferrule *to be exposed and fusion spliced* to the fiber optic cable. The ferrule holder (i.e., barrel 30) in Hultermans et al. is not removably attached to the ferrule 40. Instead, the ferrule 40 is secured in the first end 36 of the barrel 30 (column 3, lines 51-52) and the barrel 30 (i.e., ferrule holder) is slidably receivable into the housing 20 (column 3, lines 47-48). As previously mentioned, the optical fiber 41 does not

extend from the ferrule to e exposed and fusion spliced to the fiber optic cable. Thus, claim 6 is patentable. Claim 7 depends from patentable base claim 6, and thus, is likewise allowable for at least the same reasons.

Method claim 8 similarly specifically requires that the piece of (pre-mounted) optical fiber extend from the ferrule in a rearward direction; that the ferrule holder be removably attachable to the ferrule; that the piece of optical fiber extending outward from the rearward portion of the ferrule be fusion spliced to an optical fiber in the fiber optic cable; and that the ferrule be inserted into the ferrule holder after the piece of optical fiber and the optical fiber are fused together with the ferrule holder housing a portion of the piece of optical fiber and a portion of the optical fiber. As discussed above, Hultermans et al. fails to disclose or fairly suggest any of these required limitations. Thus, claim 8 is patentable. Claim 9 depends from patentable base claim 8, and thus, is likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 6-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

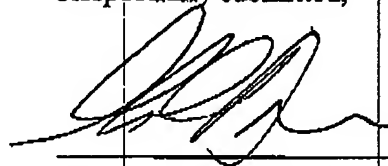
Applicants note the Examiner asserts that "the optical fiber has an end point *within the ferrule holder and can be fusion spliced* to an optical fiber 14 of the optical fiber cable 12." Office Action at page 2, paragraph 3 (emphasis added). However, the Examiner does not explain how the structure of Hultermans et al. would permit the optical fiber 41 *within the ferrule holder 40* to be fusion spliced to the end 14-1 of the optical fiber 14 of the fiber optic cable 12 without first *exposing the optical fiber 41* outside the ferrule holder 40, or *without providing a window or other opening through the ferrule holder 40* adjacent the end point of the optical fiber 41.

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Page 7**CONCLUSION**

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection to the claims and to reconsider the application. This Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action and places the application in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to issue a Notice of Allowability for the pending claims 6-9. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned directly to further the prosecution of any remaining issues, and thereby expedite allowance of the application.

This Amendment does not result in more independent or total claims than paid for previously. Accordingly, no fee for excess claims is believed to be due. The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any other fee, including any excess claims fee, due in connection with the filing of this response to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not already accounted for, such an extension is requested and the fee should likewise be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. Any overpayment should be credited to Deposit Account No. 19-2167.

Respectfully submitted,



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